

Next Generation Higher National Unit Specification

Performance Skills: Acting, Voice and Movement (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: J79W 47

SCQF level: 7 (40 SCQF credit points)

Valid from: session 2024 to 2025

Prototype unit specification for use in pilot delivery only (version 2.2) October 2024

This unit specification provides detailed information about the unit to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year.

This unit specification is for teachers and lecturers and contains all the mandatory information required to deliver and assess the unit.

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Unit purpose

This unit enables learners to develop skills in acting, voice and movement. Learners develop skills in:

- ◆ the acting process
- ◆ textual analysis
- ◆ being aware of the physical health required for acting
- ◆ voice
- ◆ movement

We recommend the unit to learners who have an interest in developing their acting skills and for those who have completed Acting and Performance (SCQF level 6); Acting and Theatre Performance (SCQF level 6); and Higher or Advanced Higher drama.

Learners who complete the unit may wish to progress to further studies and seek work in the performing arts industry.

Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

- 1 apply understanding of the actor's core techniques in warm-ups
- 2 apply key acting practices in rehearsals and performances
- 3 show character development in an extract from a published play
- 4 demonstrate vocal techniques in a range of materials
- 5 demonstrate vocal skills in the process of creating character through to performance
- 6 demonstrate movement techniques in a range of materials
- 7 demonstrate movement skills in the process of creating character through to performance
- 8 develop general and subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills in sustainability and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Evidence requirements

Outcome 1

Learners demonstrate actors' core techniques in warm-ups. Learners must:

- ◆ apply a range of approaches to physically warming up the body, including cardiovascular and mobility exercises for a full-body physical warm-up
- ◆ demonstrate an appropriate physical warm-up in sequence
- ◆ demonstrate a vocal warm-up designed to prepare the voice for performance
- ◆ apply a series of activities demonstrating clear understanding of vocal anatomy and physiology

To assess learners' competence in the knowledge and skills for this outcome, you observe and assess their participation in regular warm-ups. You assess learners' physical warm-up demonstrations, in which they evidence their knowledge of appropriate movement activities and sequences, and their warm-up demonstrations in which they evidence their knowledge of the vocal anatomy.

Outcome 2

Learners apply key acting practices in rehearsals and performances. Learners must:

- ◆ demonstrate their understanding of the key principles of at least two acting practices in class-based workshops and rehearsals
- ◆ apply their skills in the creation of two contrasting characters, created from text and/or observation
- ◆ demonstrate their understanding of appropriate characterisation, vocal and physical techniques by applying these to the performances of their two contrasting characters

The character performances should each last a minimum of 2 minutes. They can be longer in length if integrated with another unit such as Performance Skills: Application and Acting Methods and Practitioners.

To assess learners' competence in the knowledge and skills for this outcome, you observe their participation in ongoing practical workshops, classes and rehearsals. You also observe and assess their two performance pieces. Performances should be filmed as evidence.

Outcome 3

Learners show character development in an extract from a published play. Learners must:

- ◆ analyse a script, with particular focus on character motivation, the emotional journey, given circumstance, objectives, obstacles and subtext. Learners should demonstrate an understanding of physical and vocal choices in the process of creating character
- ◆ demonstrate the creation of character from text (the scene should include a minimum of two performers, and last a minimum 15 minutes)
- ◆ apply both physical and vocal skills in the creation of character for performance
- ◆ effectively engage with the text and character

To assess learners' competence in the knowledge and skills for this outcome, you assess the script analysis required for the selected extract. You observe and assess their performances.

Outcome 4

Learners demonstrate vocal techniques in a range of materials. Learners must:

- ◆ participate in a minimum of two contrasting performances that demonstrate vocal requirements and dynamics for a range of texts and performance spaces
- ◆ apply appropriate use of breath, tone, resonance, pitch, articulation, and projection

To assess learners' competence in the knowledge and skills for this outcome, you observe and assess their participation in performances in which they demonstrate the knowledge and skills required.

Outcome 5

Learners demonstrate vocal skills in the process of creating character through to performance. Learners must:

- ◆ demonstrate a character's identity by appropriately using voice in terms of fluidity, accuracy, and expressiveness in performance
- ◆ apply textual understanding, to ensure appropriate use of the voice in performance of a character from a published play
- ◆ critically reflect on their practice, with a view to improvement

To assess learners' competence in the knowledge and skills for this outcome, you observe and assess their vocal skills in their performance. You assess their reflective practices during a professional discussion.

Outcome 6

Learners demonstrate movement techniques in a range of materials. Learners must:

- ◆ demonstrate performance evidence (solo or group) in a movement sequence lasting a minimum of 1 minute, after being given 1 hour to explore a given stimulus
- ◆ perform, in a pair or group, a movement sequence showing clear evidence of movement techniques. This can be a movement piece of approximately 2 to 3 minutes, or can be longer in length if integrated with a devised or other unit

In their performances, learners must:

- ◆ select and refine movement ideas
- ◆ apply appropriate compositional devices
- ◆ make effective use of dynamics to either add variation and/or underpin intention
- ◆ make a meaningful contribution to the movement sequence

To assess learners' competence in the knowledge and skills for this outcome, you observe and assess their participation in two contrasting performances, in which they demonstrate the knowledge and skills required.

Outcome 7

Learners demonstrate movement skills in the process of creating character through to performance. Learners must:

- ◆ demonstrate a minimum of three appropriate physical techniques in the development of character
- ◆ justify physical techniques in their creation of a character
- ◆ identify character motivation, given circumstances, status, objectives and any obstacles and how they had an impact on the physicality of the character

To assess learners' competence in the knowledge and skills for this outcome, you observe and assess their movement skills in the portrayal of a character in a performance. You assess their understanding of their movement skills for character work in a professional discussion.

Final performances must be recorded.

Outcome 8

Learners develop general and subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills in sustainability and the UN SDGs. Learners must:

- ◆ identify and describe sustainability in the context of the UN SDGs
- ◆ explain how one product or process relevant to their qualification could be made more sustainable and help meet the aims of at least two selected UN SDGs

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The standard of evidence for the outcomes should be consistent with the SCQF level of the unit.

Knowledge and skills

The following table shows the knowledge and skills covered by the unit outcomes:

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 1 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ anatomy and physiology of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — breath — pitch — tone — resonance — articulation — projection ◆ the importance of breath, from inhalation to speech production ◆ the importance of warm-ups ◆ various approaches to physically warming up the body, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — group games and exercises that raise the heart rate — aerobic exercise — conditioning and strengthening exercises — flexibility and stretching exercises ◆ warming up the body in sequence 	<p>Outcome 1 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ energise and warm up the voice effectively ◆ apply a range of approaches to physically warming up the body ◆ demonstrate an appropriate physical warm-up in sequence ◆ apply an appropriate vocal warm-up to prepare the voice for rehearsal and performance
<p>Outcome 2 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the key principles of different acting practices and the differences between them ◆ the difference between the styles of acting required for various texts ◆ analysis of a range of texts for style, tone and structure ◆ rehearsal etiquette and required preparation for acting work, including voice and movement 	<p>Outcome 2 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ demonstrate understanding of key acting principles across a range of practical exercises ◆ apply understanding of different practitioners' methods in performance opportunities ◆ apply principles and methods in effective performance ◆ communicate an effective understanding of different acting styles in performance ◆ work effectively with other actors and a director in rehearsal ◆ perform a range of characters, using acting skills to differentiate

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 3 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ script analysis, with particular focus on motivation, the emotional journey, given circumstances, objectives, obstacles and subtext ◆ methods of developing a character from text ◆ the process of applying physical and vocal skills in the creation of character from text 	<p>Outcome 3 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ explore character development in a rehearsal process, identifying changes and growth in communication of character ◆ apply appropriate physical and vocal skills in the communication of character ◆ creatively engage with character development processes ◆ rehearse effectively, independently and with others ◆ effectively engage with text in rehearsal and development ◆ explore a range of physical and vocal choices in the development of character
<p>Outcome 4 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ differentiation in vocal technique required for different performance opportunities ◆ vocal requirements and dynamics for different texts and performance spaces ◆ textual clues for vocal delivery ◆ expressiveness, fluency and accuracy appropriate to texts 	<p>Outcome 4 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ demonstrate vocal techniques and development across a range of materials ◆ demonstrate appropriate use of breath, tone, articulation, pitch and projection for different performance requirements ◆ demonstrate an awareness of their own vocal qualities and areas for development

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 5 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the application of vocal techniques to communicate mood, style, and atmosphere ◆ character intention and circumstances ◆ expressiveness, fluency and accuracy appropriate to character ◆ methods of reflective practice 	<p>Outcome 5 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ communicate an effective presentation ◆ communicate effective characterisation ◆ convey character for performance requirements, demonstrating appropriate use of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — breath — tone — articulation — pitch — projection ◆ rehearse and take direction ◆ critically reflect on practice for improvement
<p>Outcome 6 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ various types of movement stimulus and how to select and refine ideas from these ◆ use of dynamics and movement improvisation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — weight: level of tension, changes in force of gravity — space: direct movement, flexible movement — time: fast, slow, accelerated, decelerated, long duration, short duration — flow: successive, simultaneous, bound, free ◆ compositional devices including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — motifs — repetition — canon — mirroring — matching — unison 	<p>Outcome 6 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ demonstrate a short movement sequence from stimulus ◆ respond to stimulus ◆ perform a group movement sequence ◆ apply compositional devices in a movement sequence

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 7 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ physical techniques in creating a character, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — physical tensions — gestures — mannerisms and idiosyncrasies — body language — physical tempo rhythms — posture — weight balance ◆ the motivation, given circumstances, status, objectives and obstacles of a character 	<p>Outcome 7 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ demonstrate physical techniques in character development ◆ justify physical techniques used in character development
<p>Outcome 8 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the relationship between sustainability principles and the UN SDGs ◆ two UN SDGs that have relevance to the unit 	<p>Outcome 8 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ review the SDGs ◆ review unit content against the SDGs to identify a sustainability-related issue ◆ apply their knowledge and understanding of sustainability and the SDGs to propose improvement

Meta-skills

Throughout this unit, learners develop meta-skills to enhance their employability in the acting and performance sector.

Self-management

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ focusing: remaining focused throughout rehearsals and performances
- ◆ integrity: being a reliable member of a cast; respect for others; punctuality and attendance at rehearsal
- ◆ adapting: working with others as part of an ensemble; taking direction; developing materials; reacting to audiences
- ◆ initiative: creating and developing ideas

Social intelligence

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ communicating: interacting through devising, performing, and presenting
- ◆ feeling: empathy with, and respect for, fellow cast members; empathy with characters; empathy with a story; inclusivity in practice
- ◆ collaborating: working in a team; being part of a cast; taking direction

Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ creativity: being artistic in devising, rehearsing, and developing character and storylines
- ◆ sense-making: researching; analysing text
- ◆ curiosity: learning about new materials and stimuli; characterisation
- ◆ critical thinking: reviewing and reflecting on work of self and others

Literacies

Throughout this unit, learners have opportunities to develop their literacy skills.

Communication

Learners develop communication skills by working with others, collaborating with a team, being part of an ensemble, and devising, presenting and performing.

Digital

Learners develop digital skills and computer literacy by researching and communicating with others in a group or cast.

Learning for Sustainability

Throughout this unit, you should encourage learners to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of sustainability.

This includes:

- ◆ a general understanding of social, economic, and environmental sustainability
- ◆ a general understanding of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- ◆ a deeper understanding of subject-specific sustainability
- ◆ the confidence to apply the skills, knowledge, understanding and values they develop in the next stage of their life

We suggest that the following SDGs are identifiable in the unit:

- ◆ good health and well-being (SDG 3)
- ◆ quality education (SDG 4)

Delivery of unit

This is a mandatory unit within the HNC Acting and Performance.

We recommend that this unit runs throughout the duration of the HNC Acting and Performance course.

There are opportunities to integrate and cross-assess with the other mandatory units:

- ◆ Performance Skills: Application (SCQF level 7)
- ◆ Industry and Audition Skills (SCQF level 7)

There are also opportunities to integrate and cross-assess with optional units.

Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

Content and context for this unit

Apply understanding of the actor's core techniques in warm-ups (outcome 1)

Learners demonstrate an appropriate vocal and physical warm-up in sequence. Various types of physical warm-ups can be explored, from group games and exercises that raise the heart rate to aerobic warm-ups, conditioning and strength exercises, and more controlled warm-ups such as yoga, pilates and the Alexander technique. Learners should explore exercises that relieve tension in the body and prepare the actor for performance.

For their assessment of a movement-based warm-up, learners should demonstrate a sequential warm-up. They should begin with an initial exercise to increase the heart rate and engage the breath; move through the body from head down to the feet; and finish on finding focus and centring the breath to a state of readiness.

The vocal warm-up should cover the journey of the breath through to phonation and include diaphragmatic breathwork and abdominal engagement; vocal fold warm-up; warming up the resonators; articulators; pitch, tone and articulation exercises; and energising the voice for stage performance. The warm-up should be appropriate to performance spaces and text requirements.

Apply key acting practices in rehearsals and performances (outcome 2)

You can integrate this outcome with Performance Skills: Application (SCQF level 7). Learners demonstrate their understanding of the key principles of at least two acting practices in different performance opportunities. Learners must perform in two performance events that show different styles of acting and contrasting characters. They should have a practical understanding of how to apply different principles and methods of acting in a series of exercises and performances, along with observational practice.

Learners can integrate acting practices with their stage work, and/or devised work, and/or screen work, as appropriate.

Practice might range from learners developing techniques based in naturalism and realism (for example, Stanislavski, Michael Chekov, and Uta Hagen), to exploring Brecht, Meisner, Boal, and the work of companies such as DV8, Frantic Assembly and Complicité.

These techniques could inform learners' stage and screen performance choices, alongside contrasting techniques found in stylised; physical; post-dramatic; contemporary devising; and intersectional theatre practice.

Show character development in an extract from a published play (outcome 3)

Learners demonstrate the creation of a character from text. Learners must also demonstrate a practical understanding of how to apply both physical and vocal skills in the creation of a character for performance. Learners should carry out textual analysis as part of this outcome,

with particular focus on a character's motivation, their emotional journey, given circumstances, objectives, obstacles and subtext.

Demonstrate vocal techniques in a range of materials (outcome 4)

Learners should work on a range of texts to develop and demonstrate the vocal production skills required for a range of performance opportunities. This may include materials for intimate voice; presentational voice; audio and podcasting; or a performative vocal for radio drama, stage and screen. You can deliver this outcome as a portfolio of different practices, or integrate performance projects or opportunities from other units and optional units.

Demonstrate vocal skills in the process of creating character through to performance (outcome 5)

Learners should demonstrate a vocal characterisation from a published play. You may wish to integrate this outcome with outcome 3 or with the script-based work for stage in Performance Skills: Application (SCQF level 7). You should encourage learners to document their character research, practice, and studies to justify their vocal choices and characterisation. Learners should pay attention to:

- ◆ background
- ◆ social and environmental influences
- ◆ circumstances
- ◆ mental and emotional journey
- ◆ inner and/or outer conflicts
- ◆ language
- ◆ register
- ◆ pace
- ◆ varying rhythms of text

You should encourage learners to critically reflect on character development and record feedback in rehearsals. They can do this in an online blog, logbook, journal, or online portfolio where they can upload their evidence. Learners should document their practice critically, reflecting on their growth, practice, research and development, and on how they are processing and applying their performance concepts and techniques.

Demonstrate movement techniques in a range of materials (outcome 6)

Learners demonstrate a short movement sequence from stimuli. You can introduce learners to various stimuli, from visual, auditory, kinaesthetic and ideational, and you should explore movement improvisations and sequences from these. Learners should also develop an understanding of dynamics and qualities in movement and explore a range of techniques such as Rudolf Laban's techniques, Michael Chekhov's psychological gesture, and Jacques Lecoq's seven levels of tension. Learners should also develop an understanding of compositional devices such as motifs, repetition, cannon, mirroring, matching, and unison.

Demonstrate movement skills in the process of creating character through to performance (outcome 7)

Learners demonstrate physical techniques in the development of a character. Learners should explore physical traits, including:

- ◆ facial expressions, from relaxed and soft to revealing tensions in furrowed brow
- ◆ tensions in the face, jaw and mouth, shoulders, and hands
- ◆ gestures
- ◆ mannerisms and idiosyncrasies
- ◆ body language (open; closed; aggressive; confident; assertive; deceptive; or attentive)
- ◆ physical tempo rhythms
- ◆ posture
- ◆ weight balance

Learners must justify the physical techniques used in the development of a character. They must understand the character's given circumstances, status, objectives and obstacles and identify how they have an impact on the physicality of the character.

Develop general and subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills in sustainability and the UN SDGs (outcome 8)

We encourage learners to explore how they may sustain their learning and their future careers as actors, teachers and practitioners by looking after their health and wellbeing. Throughout the unit, learners take part in regular warm-up activities to improve their physical and vocal stamina. By engaging positively with their learning, they take advantage of quality education.

Learners develop a better understanding of the sustainability principles and SDGs if you embed them throughout the unit, where relevant, rather than teach them as a separate topic. You may identify SDGs as appropriate to the unit.

You could achieve stimulation of outcome ideas (and associated SDGs) through signposting of sustainability issues in unit delivery, where relevant, or through class discussion or learner presentation.

Approaches to assessment

You use your professional judgement when observing learners in class, rehearsals and performances, to ensure all knowledge and skills are evidenced and are consistent with the SCQF level of the unit.

Apply understanding of the actor's core techniques in warm-ups (outcome 1)

Learners evidence their understanding of vocal and physical anatomy for the actor through participation in regular warm-ups. You observe and assess as they demonstrate vocal and physical requirements in two warm-ups — one vocal and one physical — in which they explain the journey of the voice as they proceed through the vocal warm-up and the sequential warm-up required in movement.

Assessment should ensure learners are secure with their understanding of vocal anatomy and physiology. Practical activities might include PowerPoint presentations followed by questions and answers; flipped lecture and/or demonstrations; a written test, or professional dialogue and/or oral questions.

You should record practical activities and/or oral questions for evidence.

Apply key acting practices in rehearsals and performances (outcome 2)

Learners perform in two events in which they apply the principles of two acting practices. These events can be stage, devised or screen and should provide learners with the opportunity to evidence the knowledge and skills within the outcome. You observe and assess learners' ongoing work in rehearsals and performances.

Show character development in an extract from a published play (outcome 3)

Learners perform in a textual extract in which they evidence the knowledge and skills requirements. You observe and assess their performance. You assess learners' understanding of textual analysis in the evidence of character motivation, their emotional journey, given circumstances, objectives, obstacles and subtext.

Demonstrate vocal techniques in a range of materials (outcome 4)

Learners demonstrate their vocal techniques in two performance projects. These could be in stage work, radio drama, screen work, audio work or any other appropriate medium. They should demonstrate:

- ◆ use of breath
- ◆ tone
- ◆ articulation
- ◆ pitch and projection for different performance requirements
- ◆ expressiveness
- ◆ fluency
- ◆ accuracy appropriate to texts

You observe and assess their performances.

Demonstrate vocal skills in the process of creating character through to performance (outcome 5)

Learners demonstrate a vocal characterisation from a published play. They should demonstrate expressiveness, fluency and accuracy appropriate to character. They should apply appropriate vocal techniques as stated in the 'Knowledge and skills' section. You observe and assess their performances.

Demonstrate movement techniques in a range of materials (outcome 6)

Learners demonstrate their movement techniques in two performances. One should be a movement sequence lasting a minimum of 1 minute, after having 1 hour to explore a given stimulus. The second should be a movement sequence, working in a pair or group, showing

clear evidence of movement techniques. This can be a movement piece of approximately 2 to 3 minutes, or can be longer in length if integrated with a devised or other unit. Learners should demonstrate:

- ◆ dynamics
- ◆ movement improvisation
- ◆ compositional techniques

You observe and assess their performances.

Demonstrate movement skills in the process of creating character through to performance (outcome 7)

Learners demonstrate movement skills in the process of creating character. They should demonstrate appropriate physical techniques as stated in the 'Knowledge and skills' section. Learners must demonstrate a minimum of three appropriate physical techniques. They can do this in a solo performance of a monologue or as part of a scene with others. You observe and assess their performances.

Learners can present their knowledge for assessment through:

- ◆ a blog
- ◆ a journal
- ◆ a PowerPoint presentation
- ◆ a written submission
- ◆ an oral presentation
- ◆ a question-and-answer session (which can be recorded in an online blog, logbook, journal or online portfolio)
- ◆ professional discussion

You can assess outcomes using assessors' checklists.

Develop general and subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills in sustainability and the UN SDGs (outcome 8)

There is a great deal of flexibility in the types of evidence that could be gathered for this outcome. For instance, evidence could be verbal or written, and examples could include (but are not limited to) a short report, a presentation, a podcast, a professional discussion or a combination of approaches.

Equality and inclusion

This unit is designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

You should take into account the needs of individual learners when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs is available on the assessment arrangements web page:

www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Information for learners

Performance Skills: Acting, Voice and Movement (SCQF level 7)

This section explains:

- ◆ what the unit is about
- ◆ what you should know or be able to do before you start
- ◆ what you need to do during the unit
- ◆ opportunities for further learning and employment

Unit information

This unit enables you to develop skills in acting, voice and movement. It provides opportunities for you to develop skills in the acting process and in textual analysis to allow you to perform in a range of materials.

During the unit you:

- ◆ explore acting principles and styles
- ◆ explore texts
- ◆ apply your knowledge to developing your skills as an actor
- ◆ learn about vocal anatomy
- ◆ learn about the importance of physical health to the actor to ensure you can warm up and prepare the body for rehearsal and performance requirements
- ◆ explore and perform a range of roles and characters
- ◆ engage creatively in practical exercises, rehearsals and performance opportunities
- ◆ develop general and subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills in sustainability and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

You develop meta-skills in self-management, social intelligence and innovation to enhance your employability.

When you finish the unit, you can progress to further studies in the performing arts and for working in the performing arts industry.

Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
2.0	Addition of Learning for Sustainability outcome.	May 2024
2.1	Wording added to page 15: 'You may identify SDGs as appropriate to the unit.'	May 2024
2.2	Change to performance group requirements in outcome 6.	October 2024

Note: please check [SQA's website](#) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this document.